

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

JANUARY 27, 2015

Adoption of Historic Preservation Ordinance for Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County

Relates to Agenda Item No. 4

The unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County (County) is home to many historical landmarks and points of historical interest that are of local and regional importance. Although the County General Plan contains language that supports historic preservation, the County does not have a system in place to encourage and ensure the preservation of older structures and landmarks that are architecturally and/or culturally significant. Experience in other jurisdictions indicates that not only is it feasible to do so, but such a system can strengthen community ties and support economic and cultural revitalization.

In 2013, the Board of Supervisors (Board) established a Mills Act program that allows property in unincorporated areas which have received recognition on the State or Federal historic registers to seek property tax incentives.

The second element of a comprehensive Historic Preservation program requires the development of an ordinance that would allow individual properties and districts to seek local historic recognition.

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The Department of Regional Planning (Regional Planning), in coordination with the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission (Landmarks Commission) and the Regional Planning Commission (Planning Commission), has developed a well thought-out historic preservation ordinance (Historic Preservation Ordinance), consisting of amendments to Title 22 (Zoning Ordinance) of the County Code, which would provide a pathway for properties in unincorporated communities to seek such recognition. Regional Planning staff has also prepared a proposed ordinance amending Title 3 (Advisory Commissions and Committees) of the County Code to authorize the Landmarks Commission to exercise the powers and perform the duties set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Consistent with the direction previously provided by this Board, the Historic Preservation Ordinance to be considered today specifically pertains to privately owned property in unincorporated areas. However, the Historic Preservation Ordinance should also provide a process to allow the Board to evaluate and designate County-owned properties as landmarks, where the Board determines that those properties meet the criteria specified in the ordinance.

In addition, as recommended by Regional Planning staff in its letter submitted to the Board on November 18, 2014, the fees associated with the Historic Preservation Ordinance generally should be reduced so as to incentivize the designation of landmarks and historic districts. However, where a property owner does not consent to a proposed designation of his or her property as an individual landmark, the Historic Preservation Ordinance appropriately requires a public hearing before the Board to allow the Board to comprehensively and substantively review the proposed designation and staffs' recommendations. The fee for applications to designate an individual landmark without the owner's consent should be as originally approved by the County

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Auditor-Controller to reflect the actual additional costs which the County will incur to thoroughly review and process such applications.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Close the public hearing and find the adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, along with the associated ordinance amending Title 3 of the County Code, is not a project requiring review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and alternatively that adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the associated ordinance amending Title 3 of the County Code is exempt from CEQA;
2. Indicate its intent to approve the recommendation of the Planning Commission to adopt the Historic Preservation Ordinance amending Title 22 of the County Code to establish a County historic preservation program, other than as follows:
 - (a) The Historic Preservation Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Commission should be amended to include a process allowing the Board of Supervisors (Board) the ability to designate County-owned properties as landmarks;
 - (b) For the following fees, the Historic Preservation Ordinance should contain the fees as recommended by Regional Planning in its letter to the Board dated November 18, 2014:
 - Appeal to Landmarks Commission, Applicant
 - Appeal to Landmarks Commission, Non-Applicant
 - Certificate of Economic Hardship Application Fee
 - Certificate of Appropriateness Application Fee
 - Certificate of Appropriateness, Administrative Application Fee

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- Historic District Nomination Application Fee;
- (c) The "Landmark Nomination Application Fee" in the Historic Preservation Ordinance should contain the fee of \$1,115 as recommended by Regional Planning in its letter to the Board dated November 18, 2014, where the application is made with owner consent, and should contain the original fee of \$3,715 as approved by the County Auditor-Controller where the application is made without owner consent, which reflects the full cost recovery for the additional public hearing before the Board associated with such applications;
3. Indicate its intent to adopt the associated ordinance amending Title 3 of the County Code to authorize the Landmarks Commission to exercise the powers and perform the duties set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance; and
4. Instruct County Counsel to prepare the final ordinances to bring back to the Board at a future meeting.

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